



**December 22, 2005**

## **Message from the Assistant Secretary**

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### **Recognizing Our Accomplishments for 2005**

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As the holidays approach, I reflect on 2005 and proudly recognize all that we have accomplished for older adults. In turn, I would like to extend a special, heart-felt thank you to everyone in the National Aging Network for all their hard work. To highlight some of our successes:

- Nineteen more states received Aging and Disability Resource Center grants this year. ADRC grants are part of President Bush's New Freedom Initiative and help states to organize their many long-term programs that support community living for the elderly and people with disabilities into a single system.
- AoA partnered with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on the Medicare Modernization Act. Together we are helping to raise awareness about the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plans among over 42 million eligible older adults.
- In December, 2005 White House Conference on Aging delegates voted on 50 resolutions and developed implementation strategies for action by individuals as well as by federal, state, tribal and local entities, and those in the public and private sectors. A report of the Conference will be sent to the President and Congress.

This year also offered several challenges such as the devastating Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that displaced thousands of older adults. Together we met these challenges head-on. In addition to providing over one million dollars in disaster relief funds for immediate reestablishment of infrastructure and resources to support full recovery, AoA and partners deployed Rapid Response Teams to assist state and local aging officials in the affected areas to assess and respond to the needs of elderly residents and evacuees. We appreciate what you have done to overcome such challenges and support your continued efforts.

Thank you again to everyone in our National Aging Network.

Happy Holidays!

Josefina G. Carbonell

## Top Stories

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### Own Your Future Campaign

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AoA along with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation is participating in a Long-Term Care Awareness Campaign called "Own Your Future." The Campaign represents a unique partnership between the federal government and states to offer a consistent message about the importance of planning ahead for long-term care. If people are more aware of their potential need for long-term care, they are more likely to take steps to prepare for the future and this will reduce the burden on public financing sources.

Phase I began January 2005 in Arkansas, Idaho, Nevada, New Jersey and Virginia. Governors from each state sent letters to about 2.1 million households with persons ages 50 to. A Long-Term Care Planning Kit was offered which featured information and an audio CD about ways to plan ahead, legal issues to consider, and how to assess private financing options.

Phase II will enable additional states to participate, beginning January 2006. When Phase II begins, consumers in campaign states may order the Planning Kit by calling 1-866-PLAN-LTC, by business reply card, or at a newly-created consumer website supported by AoA ([www.aoa.gov/ownyourfuture](http://www.aoa.gov/ownyourfuture)). Individuals outside the Phase II campaign states can also download the Planning Kit at the consumer website. For more information contact: Hunter McKay, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services/ASPE at 202-205-8999, [hunter.mckay@hhs.gov](mailto:hunter.mckay@hhs.gov) or visit [www.ltcareinfo](http://www.ltcareinfo)

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### AoA and FTA Partnership Continues to Expand Resources for Senior Transportation

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Assistant Secretary for Aging Josefina Carbonell was a keynote speaker at an October United We Ride meeting of national stakeholders involved in transportation coordination. The Assistant Secretary's presence at this meeting demonstrates the continued partnership and mutual support between AoA and the Federal Transit Administration. During her remarks, Assistant Secretary Carbonell introduced several of AoA's upcoming transportation-related products. One such product is a Senior Mobility Toolbox that highlights best practices in developing a coordinated transportation system to meet the needs of older adults. A CD of this and other tools, including a guide to developing door through door transportation services, is due for release in the next several months.

Other tools were jointly developed between AoA and FTA, including a Community Transportation Options Template. Many more resources are forthcoming, especially the implementation of a Senior Transportation Technical Assistance Center. To

access more information about these and other results of the AoA and FTA partnership, please visit: <http://www.unitedweride.gov/>.

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### **NCOA's Keeping Current on Research and Practice in Physical Activity for Older Adults**

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National Council on Aging's Center for Healthy Aging has released the fourth in its series of issue briefs on best practices in physical activity programming for older adults. The latest issue brief titled, Keeping Current on Research and Practice in Physical Activity for Older Adults, encourages and assists physical activity programmers to stay on top of the latest research and best practices in the field of physical activity and older adults. It outlines the steps to create a personal learning plan and offers a variety of tools and resources to connect programmers with the most current research and practice. To download a copy of Keeping Current on Research and Practice in Physical Activity for Older Adults, please visit:

<http://www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=73&ElementID=250>

A number of additional resources, toolkits, publications, and model programs are available on the Center for Healthy Aging Web site:

<http://www.healthyagingprograms.org>

### **Making a Difference**

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#### **Billings, Montana ADRC Reaches out to Medicare Beneficiaries**

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The Aging and Disability Resource Center operated by Yellowstone County Council on Aging in Billings, Montana understands that collaborative efforts are important to effectively serving the elderly and people with disabilities. Yellowstone's ADRC has formed a partnership with the Montana Office of Public Assistance to reach out to people with disabilities of all ages who receive both Medicare and Medicaid benefits in order to help them with the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. In June 2005, the ADRC began to include informational flyers in the monthly "spend-down" mailing sent by Public Assistance to approximately 2,500 beneficiaries. These flyers provide important information about the medication coverage changes "dualy-eligible" beneficiaries will face beginning January 2006. The ADRC recognizes the importance of these changes and wants to be sure beneficiaries know about the specialized assistance the ADRC provides to help them understand Medicare benefits. The ADRC flyers will continue to be sent until the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plan program begins in January. To learn more about Yellowstone County Council on Aging's ADRC, please visit: <http://www.ycco.org/resource%20center.htm>

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### **About AoA**

AoA works with a nationwide network of organizations and service providers to make support services and resources available to older persons and their caregivers. For more information about AoA, please contact us by mail at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, DC 20201; by phone at (202) 619-0724; by e-mail at [aoainfo@aoa.gov](mailto:aoainfo@aoa.gov); or visit us on the Web at [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov).